



February 16, 2021

OceansAlaska  
2417 Tongass Ave Suite 111-277  
Ketchikan, AK 99901

Senator Gary Stevens  
State Capitol, Room 429  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Stevens,

I hope you are doing well. As the President of the Board of Directors for OceansAlaska, a non-profit shellfish hatchery located in Ketchikan, our board supports SB 64. SB 64 creates a regulatory framework with which ADF&G can manage shellfish fishery enhancement, restoration and shellfish hatcheries, and allows the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute to help market mariculture products. This will allow interested stakeholders to either continue or begin enhancement and/or restoration of certain species. OceansAlaska supports SB 64 as it will diversify economic development, sustain cultural legacy, increase environmental stewardship, and create additional seafood markets that can help bring revenue to our coastal communities through:

1. Enhancement of traditional and economically important shellfish species.
2. Enhancement of shellfish species integral to marine ecosystems and habitat restoration.
3. Enhancement of shellfish species that are vital to climate change and pollution mitigation.
4. Enhancement of existing and new seafood markets.

Thank you for your support of SB 64 and the mariculture industry.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tomi Marsh".

Tomi Marsh  
[tmarsh@oceansalaska.org](mailto:tmarsh@oceansalaska.org)  
206-972-8217

February 15, 2021

Senator Gary Stevens  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801

**Re: Support for SB 64**

Dear Senator Stevens:

The Steering Committee of the Alaska King Crab Research, Rehabilitation and Biology (AKCRRAB) program would like to express appreciation and support for Senate Bill 64. Our group needs this legislation to continue our program and its potential benefits to the crab stocks and to Alaska fisheries and communities.

The AKCRRAB program is a coalition of university, federal and stakeholder groups, formed in 2006 with the goals of adding to the scientific understanding of crab life history and ecology, as well as the eventual rehabilitation of depressed king crab stocks in Alaska. AKCRRAB has developed scientifically sound strategies for hatching, rearing and outplanting king crab in Alaska, in order to help restore populations to self-sustainable levels. This technology can be transferred to other crab species.

In phase one, from 2006 to 2011, AKCRRAB researchers made significant accomplishments in developing and improving methods of hatchery rearing of larval and juvenile king crab from wild-caught broodstock, to the point where large-scale production is feasible. Parallel field and laboratory studies of crab ecology and population genetics were also conducted during this time.

In the second phase, hatchery studies have been complemented by studies essential to understanding optimal release strategies, appropriate habitat, and potential impact on existing ecosystems. This research is providing the science necessary for informing the responsible release of hatchery-reared animals. Increased knowledge will allow scientists and managers to assess the feasibility of ecologically sound rehabilitation of depressed stocks, with potentially substantial benefits to Alaska.

In the third and final phase, AKCRRAB intends to evolve from the current, research-oriented coalition, to a formal entity focused on transitioning hatchery techniques and outplanting technologies to communities and industry as part of statewide efforts to help rehabilitate depleted king crab stocks. As phase three develops, the program will require support and guidance from the State of Alaska, as the transition from feasibility to implementation will need to be guided with a new regulatory structure.

Senate Bill 64 is a response to the need for new regulations for shellfish culture. Without this legislation and the implementing regulations, no further progress can be made by AKCRRAB and industry. We are literally in a holding pattern until this badly-needed legislation is successful. We have supported similar legislation now for six years, and have seen very little to no opposition.

During that time, several crab stocks have declined further, some crab fisheries have been closed, and the Bristol Bay Red King Crab population is nearing the level that will trigger extensive regulatory responses that have the potential to further restrict not only the crab fishery itself, but also groundfish fisheries. We very much hope that this Legislature will get SB 64 over the finish line.

The AKCRRAB Steering Committee is pleased that the Legislature is addressing this need. We intend to participate fully in further discussions and hearings on this important legislation. The AKCRRAB Steering Committee stands ready to testify and interact with Committee members and staff as needed. Please let us know how we can be of help.

Best regards,



Dr. Ginny L. Eckert, College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, UAF, Juneau  
Heather McCarty, Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association  
AKCRRAB Steering Committee Co-chairs

Senator Gary Stevens  
Phone: 907-465-4925  
[Senator.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov](mailto:Senator.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov)

***RE: Support for SB 64 – shellfish enhancement & ASMI marketing aquatic farm products***

Dear Senator Stevens,

February 11, 2021

The Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) would like to express strong support for Senate Bill 64 which creates a framework to manage and develop shellfish fishery enhancement and benefits the state's economy by providing a method to increase the available harvest of shellfish in an environmentally safe manner. SB 64 will also allow for the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) to market aquatic farm products furthering the development of the new mariculture industry. This bill accomplishes two priority recommendations of the Alaska Mariculture Task Force, as a part of a larger plan to fully develop the mariculture industry in Alaska, with a goal to grow a \$100 million per year industry in 20 years.

AFDF's membership is comprised of seafood harvesters, seafood processors, and support businesses. Founded in 1978, AFDF's mission is to *identify opportunities common to the Alaska seafood industry and develop efficient, sustainable outcomes that provide benefits to the economy, environment and communities.*

One of AFDF's recent areas of work is spearheading the *Alaska Mariculture Initiative*, which is meant to expedite the development of mariculture in Alaska. As a direct result of this initiative, the ***Alaska Mariculture Task Force*** was established in 2016. The Task Force completed a statewide comprehensive plan in 2018 called the [Alaska Mariculture Development Plan](#) with the goal of growing a \$100 million industry in 20 years.

SB 64 has broad stakeholder support and will accomplish two priority recommendations contained within the statewide comprehensive plan. More specifically, SB 64 will accomplish the following:

- 1) allow for shellfish fishery enhancement and restoration; and
- 2) amend the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) statutes to allow (rather than prohibit) marketing of aquatic farm products.

SB 64 creates a regulatory framework with which Alaska Department of Fish & Game's (ADF&G) can manage shellfish fishery enhancement and restoration. This will allow interested stakeholders to either continue or begin enhancement and/or restoration efforts of species such as King crab, sea cucumber,

*Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation*  
P.O. Box 2223, Wrangell, AK 99929 - Ph: 907-276-7315  
[www.afdf.org](http://www.afdf.org)



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*Harvester, At-large*  
*Alaskan Leader Seafoods*

**John Sund**  
*Service Sector, At-large*  
*Stellar North LLC*

geoduck, abalone, scallops or razor clams. Without this regulatory framework, shellfish enhancement is NOT allowed in Alaska, and development progress is halted.

As the facilitator for sustainability certification programs for the Alaska salmon fishery, AFDF has a unique viewpoint regarding concerns of the potential for negative impacts to wild shellfish from hatchery shellfish. AFDF is the Client for the Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) and the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certifications of Alaska salmon. As a part of these certifications, the ADF&G management of the salmon fishery (including salmon enhancement) is reviewed every year by independent third-party experts to determine whether it meets internationally accepted standards for sustainably managed fisheries. ***Alaska salmon is currently certified as sustainable under for the RFM and MSC programs, because ADF&G's management incorporates a precautionary approach that prioritizes wild fish and minimizes adverse impacts to wild stocks.*** ADF&G has extensive enhancement policies which protect wild stocks (e.g. genetics, release sites, marking, and disease). Given these policies, ADF&G is fulfilling its constitutional mandate to manage the State's fishery resources for sustainability. ADF&G will manage shellfish enhancement with the same constitutional mandate to protect wild stocks.

***Another benefit of developing shellfish fishery enhancement is the important role that shellfish hatcheries can play in adapting to ocean changes and acidification.*** As shellfish hatchery techniques are developed and more is learned through research, we learn more about our abilities to mitigate the effects of ocean acidification (OA) in a hatchery setting. For example, adjusting pH levels at critical juvenile stages in a hatchery can improve survival once crabs are released into the wild. Therefore, shellfish hatcheries may play a critical role in the future by helping protect wild stocks from negative impacts of OA.

***Shellfish enhancement can diversify and expand economic opportunities by increasing harvests for sport, subsistence, or commercial use.*** For example, during the years 2012-2017, salmon enhancement contributed approximately \$720 million in ex-vessel value and \$2.1 billion in first wholesale value to the state's economy. Similarly, shellfish enhancement could infuse the economies of Alaska communities.

***AFDF believes that growth of the mariculture industry can play an important role in Alaska's economic recovery from the COVID-19 disaster,*** and passage of SB 64 is central to fully enabling that economic potential. After the disaster of COVID-19, Alaskans need hope and a path to economic recovery. Mariculture can be part of that economic recovery and SB 64 will help enable this potential for private investment, without requirements for state financial investment. Thank you for your sponsorship of this mariculture bill.

Sincerely,



Julie Decker, Executive Director, AFDF

Cc: AFDF Board of Directors

# MADE IN ALASKA MARICULTURE

To: Senator Gary Stevens  
State Capitol Room 103, Juneau, AK 99801  
Phone: 907-465-4925  
[Senator.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov](mailto:Senator.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov)

**RE: Support for SB 64 – shellfish enhancement & ASMI marketing aquatic farm products**

Dear Senator Stevens,

February 11, 2021

On behalf of the Alaska Mariculture Task Force (Task Force), I would like to express strong support for Senate Bill 64, which will accomplish two priority recommendations of the Task Force, as a part of a larger plan to fully develop the mariculture industry in Alaska, with a goal to grow a \$100 million per year industry in 20 years.

*The Task Force believes that growth of the mariculture industry can play an important role in Alaska's economic recovery from the COVID-19 disaster, and passage of SB 64 is central to fully enabling that economic potential. The Task Force members recognize the difficult circumstances that cut short the 2020 legislative session in which a committee substitute version of this bill was in its final committee of referral and poised for passage. We thank you for introducing the bill again.*

In 2016, Governor Walker established and appointed members to the Task Force by [Administrative Order No.280](#), and in 2018, the Task Force completed a statewide comprehensive plan in order to accelerate the development of mariculture - the [Alaska Mariculture Development Plan](#) (attached is a [brief summary](#)). The Task Force was re-authorized in 2018 to continue work towards implementation of the Plan. Upon his election, Governor Dunleavy kept the Task Force in place, because he shares the vision of what mariculture could mean to the state: jobs and opportunities.

SB 64 has broad stakeholder support and will accomplish two priority recommendations in the statewide comprehensive plan. More specifically, SB 64 will accomplish the following:

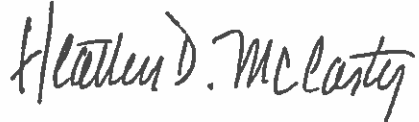
- 1) allow for shellfish fishery enhancement and restoration; and
- 2) amend the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) statutes to allow marketing of aquatic farm products.

After the disaster of COVID-19, Alaskans need hope and a path to economic recovery. The Task Force strongly believes that mariculture can be part of the economic recovery and SB 64 will help enable this potential for private investment, without requirements for state financial investment – a bright spot on the horizon.

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Thank you for your consideration of this mariculture bill as part of a package of legislation that creates and supports economic activity for Alaskans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather D. McCarty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Heather McCarty, Chair, Alaska Mariculture Task Force

Cc: Alaska Mariculture Task Force



PO Box 1758

Homer, AK 99603 907-401-1372  
info@alaskashellfish.org

[www.alaskashellfish.org](http://www.alaskashellfish.org)

February 8, 2021

Senator Stevens  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: Support for SB 64 – Shellfish Enhancement Projects; Hatcheries; Fees

Dear Senator Stevens,

The Alaska Shellfish Growers Association (ASGA) would like to express support for SB 64. We recognize that SB 64 is part of a larger effort to develop mariculture in Alaska.

While the focus of this bill supports enhancement efforts, we believe that the mariculture industry overall will benefit overall from a healthy base of infrastructure that supports both growers and enhancement efforts. We also believe that allowing ASMA to support our industry could be beneficial.

SB 64 plays an important role in the development of mariculture in Alaska, creating a regulatory framework that supports ADF&G in management and enhancement efforts. This would allow interested stakeholders to either continue or begin enhancement and/or restoration of species such as King crab, sea cucumber, geoduck, abalone, razor clams, or others, some of which have been successfully farmed in other areas. This framework (SB 64) is absolutely necessary to continue moving forward with the development of mariculture.

Thank you for sponsoring this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Eric Wyatt, Vice President  
Alaska Shellfish Growers Association





***Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery***

***PO Box 369  
Seward, AK  
907 224-5181  
jjh@seward.net***

Senator Gary Stevens  
Room 103  
State Capital Building  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov

Re: SB 64— Shellfish Enhancement

February 5, 2021

Dear Senator Stevens,

Thank you for co-sponsoring the Shellfish Enhancement legislation to the Alaska State Legislature. As Director of the Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery I would like to express my support and the importance of this bill.

HB41 would allow us to expand on the work we have been doing for over 20 years on many of the shellfish stocks in Alaska. We have developed hatchery technology techniques for red and blue king crab, littleneck, butter and razor clam, cockles and most recently abalone. We have conducted experimental out stocking experiments with some of these species with great success. We now need the legal mechanism to do large scale projects to determine if we could make a significant difference with increasing populations and harvest opportunities for many fisheries.

Specifically, we would like to begin the application of the techniques we have developed for red king crabs. Although we make no claim that we will be able to resurrect the red king crab populations throughout Alaska we do believe, based on our preliminary work, that we will be able to contribute to localized populations.

This legislation has been through extensive review and should be enacted to move our industry forward.

Sincerely,

Jeff Hetrick  
Director